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A note on *Lernaea bistricornis* Harding, a parasitic Copepod from Lake Tanganyika

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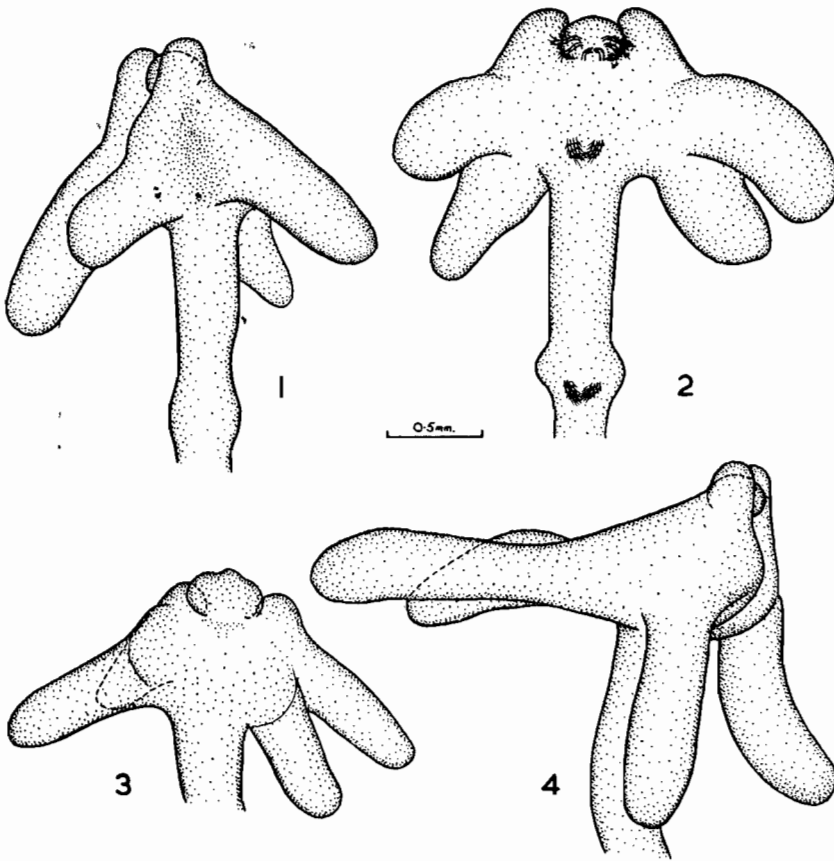
The parasitic Copepod *Lernaea bistricornis* HARDING was described by HARDING (1950) from a single specimen found in Lake Tanganyika on the endemic Cichlid fish *Cardiopharynx schoutedeni* POLL. No further specimens were known until recently when several individuals were collected in the same lake by Dr. G. MARLIER from the endemic Cichlid fishes *Cyathopharynx furcifer* (BOULENGER) and *Callochromis pleurospilus* (BOULENGER). These records indicate that *L. bistricornis* has fairly wide host preferences, at least within the family Cichlidae, and suggest that, like its relative *L. lophiara* HARDING which parasitizes the Cichlid fishes of L. Nyasa, it is capable of parasitizing any member of this group within its range of distribution.

HARDING's description, while quite diagnostic and accompanied by excellent figures, is of necessity rather brief and, having only a single specimen at his disposal, he was unable to give any information on the range of variation of the animal. The following notes, therefore, are intended to supplement his description.

The anchor (figs. 1-4) usually has the general form of that found in the holotype, and all specimens possess the highly characteristic knobs or protuberances on either side of the head described by HARDING. Morphologically these appear to be anterior prolongations of the ventral arms though this is not apparent in all specimens. They vary in size, and although they usually overtower the head this is not invariably the case as can be seen from fig. 3. In several of the recently acquired specimens the anchor arms are somewhat longer than is the case in the holotype and are less swollen at their bases. This applies particularly

to the specimen illustrated in fig. 4 which is distinctly atypical and whose dorsal arms are much elongated.

In the region of leg 2 there are usually distinct lateral swellings rather similar to those which are present in the same position in *L. haplocephala* (CUNNINGTON), but their size varies from individual to indi-



Figs 1-4. — Anchors of four different individuals of *Lernaea bistricornis* HARDING. 1. Lateral; 2. Ventral; 3. Dorsal; 4. Lateral. The specimen illustrated in fig. 4 is atypical in having particularly long dorsal arms. The scale applies to all four specimens.

dual. Those shown in fig. 2 are the most conspicuous observed. In other specimens they are scarcely perceptible and even when conspicuous in dorsal and ventral aspects they are often difficult to see when viewed laterally.

There seems to be little variation in the form of the abdomen and pregenital prominence, and the descriptions of those of the holotype apply equally well to the new material. The body of the holotype was, however, « evenly curved into a semicircle » but this is not typical, most of the present specimens being almost straight. As in the holotype there is usually a sinistral torsion of about 90°. This takes place mostly in the region between the second and third pairs of legs.

HARDING was able to examine the armature of only the third and fourth pair of legs. The new material has enabled the first two pairs to be examined and has shown that the exopod setation is the same as that found in *L. cyprinacea* L. and most other species of the genus.

The length of the largest available specimen is 10.2 mm, or a little longer than the holotype.

The first specimen to be described was attached « at the base of a pelvic fin » while, according to their collector, the present specimens were attached « behind the pectoral fin ». It seems likely therefore that this species favours the rather soft areas usually associated with the bases of pectoral and pelvic fins.

I should like to express my thanks to Dr. G. MARLIER for placing this interesting material at my disposal.

REFERENCE

- HARDING, J. P. (1950). — On some species of *Lernaea* (Crustacea, Copepoda : Parasites of freshwater fish). — *Bull. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.)*, I : 1-27.